The Theosophical FORUM

SEPTEMBER 1903

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An Outline of the Secret Doctrine:

COSMOGENESIS.

A series of articles with this title was published twelve years ago in LUCIFER, an attempt being made to follow the Stanzas, and to make clear the metaphysical and scientific principles involved in the teaching of the Building of the Worlds.

Repeated requests have been made to the Editor of the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM to reprint these articles, but it may be more advisable to issue them in book form, uniform with ANCIENT AND MODERN PHYSICS Readers who approve of this suggestion are invited to send an expression of their views to

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THE THEOSOPHICAL

FORUM

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FRAGMENTS.

I.

If you have patience and devotion you will understand these things, especially if you think much of them and meditate on them, for you have no conception of the *power of meditation.*

II.

Beware of anger, beware of vanity, beware too of self-depreciation; these are all lions in your path. Live each day, and each moment in the day, by the light within, fixing your gaze upon it with faith and love. When the hours of darkness come and you see it not, wait in patience and contentment, knowing it still burns and that when morning dawns, if your watch has been constant, you will see it burning, perchance more brightly than before. "The darkest hour is before the dawn;" grieve not therefore nor feel one moment's disquietude. You lamp is lit, tend it faithfully, it matters not that the outer eyes do not behold it. Those who know and love you can always see it, and it may also be shining in some other heart which as yet has no light of its own. * * *

The Lodge waits and watches ever, and ever, ever works—think you not we have patience?—and those who serve us must do the same. You are right, no detail is overlooked. Life is made up of details, each a step in the ladder, therefore who shall dare say they are "small!" * * *

We are closer than you know, and love and thought bring us still nearer.

Kill out doubt which rises within; that is not yourself, *you know!* The doubt is a *maya,* cast it aside, listen not to its voice which whispers low, working on your lack of self-confidence. Therefore I say have neither vanity nor self-depreciation. If you are the Higher Self, you are all that is great, but since your daily consciousness is far, far below, look at the matter frankly and impartially. * * * Vex yourself not with contradictions. You know that you must stand alone; *stand* therefore! * * *

Keep yourself *high,* and strengthen your faith. * * *

By your own supreme act of faith, you must claim and hold these things.

III.

Let not Humility, that tender presence, become a stumbling block. In so doing you sin against the Higher Self.

IV.

Closer insight gives heavier responsibility—do not forget that —and a responsibility which affects others more than it does yourself. See to it then that the outer does not obscure the inner, for your lamp must be carried aloft for others to see, or not seeing it, to continually feel. * * *

Do not confuse the outer with the inner therefore. Though the outer be full and rich remember it is so because of the inner *shining through,* and look ever back to that which shines. No sorrow, no disappointment lie there, but a fullness of realization of which you have no conception and a power and strength which shall lift you above these confusions to a sure place of your own. You have been too harsh with your lower nature, that leads to dangerous reactions. Quiet, steady effort is far better, casting aside all thought of results. Treat your mind as a child, lead it firmly but gently and in all ways and at all times strengthen your faith.

V.

Your instrument must not be like another's instrument—no need to duplicate these. It is your special kind which is needed and wherein you differ from others is not where you fail, but where, if perfected, you may do your own special work which they cannot do.

VI.

Through these tears of blood you will learn; through this suffering you will gain the power to aid your fellows. What to you is the approbation or disapprobation of any one? Work and wait on and all will be well.

VII.

Sink into the very depths of your being, you will find all there. Be a follower of no man, follow the inner voice.

CAVÉ.

LEO AND SERAPHIM.

The following is a translation from the Russian of M. Menshikoff, a writer on mystical and philosophic subjects of growing renown. Saint Savva of Sarovo, àpropos of whom the article was written, was a man of great holiness, whose life offers all the characteristics of Yoga, or if you like it better, of saintship. A humble monk of humble origin, he led a life of entire seclusion for many years, in the midst of an almost virgin forest, having added to the usual monastic vows of chastity, poverty, and abstinence, the vow of silence. He wore holes in the stone on which he knelt down to pray, during many years. His food was the roots and the berries of the forest. He is said to have remained in the same position, his arms stretched upwards, during several months. The monastic tradition ascribes to him the power of levitation and of taming the most ferocious bears and wolves by a mere kind word. Having achieved the "union with God" in his wilderness, he returned to the Sarovo monastery, and ever since, in his life time as after his death, Russians from all parts of the land sought his help in their troubles. Miracles worked at his grave and cures performed in his name made him known all over Russia, a fame which was never shaken, but always increased all the seventy years since his death—he died 2 January, 1833. The voice of the people is the voice of God in matters of this kind pre-eminently. Yet no preparations were made for the canonization of Savva of Sarovo until the completion of very strict investigations made by an especially appointed Committee which was to verify the authenticity of miracles. Every man his trade, and the trade of Saint Savva seemingly is to cheer people up, the very thought of him bringing into the hearts of his devotees an atmosphere of gentle childlike cheerfulness. The readers of the THEOSOPHICAL FORUM are especially invited to give their attention to the speculations of M. Menshikoff concerning the bodies of saints and of common mortals. In a way, they may be not altogether right, but they are wonderfully suggestive.—EDITOR.

The burial of Leo XIII coincided with the uncovering of the remains of Seraphim of Sarovo. And standing over the remains of the "Most Holy" and the holy, the Christendom of the West and the East, has a good opportunity to ponder once more over the destiny of man and the eternal problems of our vain and sad existence, which, if we so will, is our grand, our blissful existence.

It seems that the West and the East have disagreed in their

definition of holiness. Taking a living priest, the West has clad him in a snow white attire, and surrounded him with royal honors, placing him on the one "universal" throne, crowning him with the triple superhuman crown; and trusting his hands with the keys of the kingdom of heaven, it has assigned to him the title of the Most Holy, the infallible. Yet the result of all this is a fiction, which has some reality only so long as the faithful are not quite sincere with themselves. In reality, no Catholic, except the very humblest, has any serious belief in the papal throne, the papal tiara or the papal keys, nor in the infallibility of the venerable old gentleman, who by birth is merely a poor nobleman of Tuscany, as so many others. Eastern Christianity acted exactly the opposite way: it assigned nothing at all to its saint during his life time. The son of a tradesman, also as many others, he showed indifference towards the world, which measures greatness by titles and crowns. These, it is true, never were offered to him, but he resigned even such good things of this world as are within the reach of most people: wealth, renown, influential position, the joys of home and society. The Russian saint gave up everything, obeying the injunction: give up everything and you will get everything. He gave up his freedom and civilized existence and went into seclusion to lead a primitive life.

Like a courageous explorer on his progress towards the North Pole, Savva of Sarovo moved forwards in search of a great object, of a certain point, as immutable as the North Pole and serving for a point around which turns the world. He walked forward, but in reality he was going back. He was going away from human society smothered by vanities and falsehoods and returning back into the natural condition of elementary purity and eternal holiness, in which, according to the faith of our Church, we are all born.

The walks of the "Most Holy" and the holy were quite different. And lo! in the very days when Leo was dying once for all, Seraphim was born once more and also once for all. The bodiless image of the Saint became more real for numberless believers, than it ever was in his life time. Then he was reached by a few, now he is reached by everybody. Then his holiness was only supposed, now it is acknowledged, and it is exactly his holiness that is of interest and of value for everybody. The living man is no more,

but there remains something more lasting, the undying memory of the man. Seen through the eyes within, he not only lives, but takes part in the lives of many: he teaches, he warns, he consoles. You may deny his existence if you wish: his influence *is* felt, and there can be no influence without some real power being present.

No doubt, Leo XIII also will live in his deeds. But both the deeds and the mortal image of the Pope will grow more pale and more useless with every day. We admit that in his day Leo XIII was the highest type of delicate tactfulness and diplomatic talent. We admit that both the welfare and the dignity of the Catholic Church have gained tremendously whilst he was Pope, but what is all this in sight of eternity, of true human life?.....

A saint, like a genius, like a hero, is to be born, not made. Whole series of generations* have to work, consciously or unconsciously, for the development of the blissful soul, endowed with the extreme refinement, tenderness and beauty, which nature so often gives to her elementary works. Having entered the world of "sorrow and tears," perchance the horrible surroundings of vice, a child of this kind necessarily must long to get out of the imperfect world, all his instinct propelling him towards the prenatal conditions he well remembers. Why should the son of a tradesman—though his parents be as pious as can be—enter the monastic order? Simply because he wished for it and could not get over the desire. Yet you may be sure that the world did everything to ensnare him. .....But his desire went towards holiness as another man's desire goes towards vice. A sceptically inclined person may object: "he became a monk for vanity's sake, he wanted adoration." But this is not true. A vain man enters a clerical academy that some day he may become the wearer of a mitre and of many stars and decorations. He may become an author, an actor, an officer of the general staff, but he will not go to the wilderness, or if once there he will hurry out of it again. Only sensitive souls, in raptures before nature and harmonies inaudible for us, before the poetry of sunrise and sunset and heavenly contemplations, go into the wilderness, the "beautiful mother wilderness." The wilderness attracts only people, whom we may call artists of prayer, en-

* Or births?—*Editor.*

dowed with the rare talent of religious inspiration. When all is said and done, we all seek but that which constitutes the secret of our being, the secret of happiness?

First the monastery, then the wilderness, then complete seclusion. And lastly, when the noble soul had fifteen or twenty years of concentrated preparation, the door of the cell was opened. And instead of the expected darkness, people saw light and joy, salubrious and salutary love streaming through it. The man who laboured so long has reached the longed-for condition, the condition of holiness. He distinctly hears the voice of heaven and is consumed with the desire to impart it to other men.

Holiness is a state of the soul, known in the remotest antiquity and among all nations. Of all the states, it always was considered the most perfect. And the means of reaching holiness were practically the same everywhere. In India and in Egypt monasticism flourished a thousand years before our era. Traces of mental moods inimitable in their loftiness are to be found in the Buddhist sacred books: the few Suttas I have read are simply superb. Brahmanical India still practices the ancient custom of men dedicating themselves to religious seclusion, after they have reached a certain age. Towards the end every well-bred man must give himself to this superior state, giving up the world. Family cares are his lot till he is forty, after which he is to manage society and state affairs, but when he has reached sixty, every Hindu, whatever his condition, puts on the mendicant's garb and takes the cup in which to collect alms. He seeks the wilderness, seclusion, and profound contemplation. He builds up his soul outside of space and time, outside of the binding conditions of the vanities of civilization. Remember Rudyard Kipling's Purun Bhagat.

All great recluses like Buddha, leave asceticism, having gone through it. Born with a noble soul, they are able to reach a condition in which the flesh is subdued and the serene and blissful mastery of the spirit is established for ever. Why should one repress a body as modest and as inexacting as the body of saints? A body which no more wishes for anything, which is well content with a cupful of water and a handful of rice to keep up existence?

It is different if the flesh was forced into the state of a beast, and of a greedy and irritable beast, at that, who is forever torn up

by passions. I am inclined to think that the struggle with a beast of that kind is rarely successfully ended, and can hardly ever be complete. A continued asceticism in such case may have its use. But as there is such a thing as a hopelessly depressed soul, there also is such a thing as a holy body. The body of a saint is equal to a new creation, perfectly balanced, perfectly peaceful, altogether obedient to the spirit. It is free from any inclinations and preferences, free from anything which it would be difficult to give up the moment the higher consciousness demands it. This gentle "holy flesh" is the personification of health. It is possessed by truly righteous people, and, it seems to me, only by them. A recluse, with a cave in the side of a mountain for a home, with a piece of bread for his daily food, lives up to eighty and even to a hundred, knowing nothing whatever about either doctor or medicine. A great spirit, spreading like a majestic crown of leaves above the trunk of a palm, seems to forget this dry trunk of life, leaving it to feed the best it can on the arid soil of a desert—and it appears that there always is food enough.

There is no doubt that the exterior achievement of a saint chiefly consists in preparing the flesh to the new condition of the soul, in the "mortification" of the flesh. But what is this mortification? As a sailor, going out to sea, carefully examines his craft, stopping all the chinks, so a man who is seeking holiness. He actually has need of a different, of a stronger body. A body strengthened not through gymnastics which is the upsetting of natural balance, being a process of growing coarser tissues at the expense of tenderer ones, but by a more natural method, by abstinence. Abstinence is a gymnastic of the spirit. The enlarged organs are trained by the lack of exercise and nutrition until they are atrophied to what they normally were meant to be. The object of a sculptor is the gradual removal of all the unecessary parts of a rock, until this rock is transformed into a beautiful piece of sculpture. The object of a worker for righteousness is the same: he gradually removes from his body all the unnecessary flesh and fat until even physically he grows to be a perfect figure, perfect in the sense of something which preserves only the truly necessary.

The veneration for the undecayed remains of holy men seems to me to be founded exactly on this relation between spirit and

flesh. The bodies of saints are not altogether what ours are, in the physiological sense. A well-tuned instrument is not the same as an instrument out of tune. The whole order of the body of a saint is well balanced and adapted to the fundamental object of being the servant of his thought. Once the passions, lusts and abuses of a man are absent, once he has brought to the minimum both what is received and what is spent by his body, it can not any more be identical with the body of a glutton, a drunkard, a gambling sportsman or an indolent idler. The body made pure becomes the material root of the soul, and as such it is worthy of our veneration, like any other perfect thing we wish to acquire ourselves.

The ancients worshipped beautiful statues. They were the marble undecayed remains of the heathen world, which were to remind the people of godlike humanity. I am no theologian and do not judge from a theological point of view. But it seems to me that the asceticism of the righteous is eminently the return of the body to pristine innocence and purity. And the first natural result of this is a pristine health. Consequently the object of true asceticism is not the "killing" of the flesh, but the killing of the monstrosities, of the diseases of the flesh, not the mortification, but the return to the original bliss. In my eyes, this position is sufficiently proved by the excellent health of the people whose life is truly holy. Of course I know, that most excellent people sometimes ail, but, in their case also, sickness is a sign of some wrong, either personal or hereditary. Sickness, like deformity and ugliness, bears witness to a partial inertia of the soul: a blameless soul must have a perfect incarnation. Holy men can bring themselves back to the freshness of early years. Like infants who know nothing about sexual love, narcotics, intoxication, satiety, the holy feel light and serene. Being content with very little, they reach the most important. Like infants, they do not feel their bodies, and so can give themselves to the labour of the spirit. Is not their holiness but a new infancy, begun in the same life, a second blossoming in the same summer? Who can tell? But as they do not lose the acquired consciousness, their second infancy is lit up by the experience of a long life. It is about such that it was said, that their's is the kingdom of heaven.

But what intelligence is finally brought by this blissful condition?—Love for everything.

(*To be Continued.*)

ANCIENT AND MODERN PHYSICS.

AN INQUIRY, II.

Readers whose memory goes back to a paper with this title, which appeared some months ago, will remember that we started with the division of the outer and material, or at least, objective, universe, into four layers, according to the doctrine so brilliantly and suggestively set forth, in that thought-producing work, *Ancient and Modern Physics.* These four layers of the universe are what the author of that work calls: first, the prakritic, or grossly material; second, the etheric; third, the pranic; and fourth, the manasic.

It seemed to us that there must be certain forces or groups of forces, belonging to each of these layers or strata of outward existence; and, while we were certainly not in a position to catch and classify all of these forces, or even the bigger part of them, still we thought it probable that we might at least catch some of them, perhaps one of each kind, just as a specimen, and to show what the other members of its family might possibly be like, could we also catch and classify them.

So looking in this way for four classes or kinds of objective forces, to correspond to the four layers of substance described in *Ancient and Modern Physics,* we began by laying hold of one class of forces, which, in our humble opinion, decidedly belonged to the prakritic, or grossly material, layer of substance. This group of forces we called atomic, because it seemed to us that they inhered in the atoms, and that in virtue of this inherence an atom of gold was always an atom of gold, an atom of lead always lead, and so on with the other material substances. We know, of course, that you can intermingle or interlock different kinds of atoms, with surprising results: thus, silver atoms interlinked with those of nitrogen make the white sugar-like substance called lunar caustic, which is not the least like silver, nor the least like nitrogen. So of black carbon and yellow sulphur, you can make a liquid as clear as water and with surprising powers of refraction and an even more surprising perfume. Quite true; but you can take these things apart again, and you will have exactly the same amounts of silver, nitrogen, carbon and sulphur you had to start with; neither more nor less. And the silver, the sulphur, and so on, will be exactly the same character, quality, and so forth, as before. They will

have exactly the same atomic nature; or, to put it in another way, they represent groups of atomic forces which are constant in quality and nature. Moreover, it is pretty clear that the total of these atomic forces, for any big lumps of mixed materials, is a constant; and this applies to our earth, which, from one point of view, is a big lump of mixed materials; and, from another point of view, is a constant quantity of atomic forces.

Finally, as our gold is always gold in the end, our silver always silver, and our lead always lead, it is quite clear that these atomic forces do not, under any circumstances whatever, change into anything else. Otherwise they could never turn up, their very own selves, in the last act; they would be in perpetual danger of turning into something else, and forgetting what they were at the start, and so getting hopelessly mixed up. So atomic forces of each kind go on being atomic forces of that kind, to the end of the chapter. There are probably other chapters, but we are at this particular one; so that does not concern us. Moreover, there are many very perplexing things about these atomic forces; but we are going to leave them boldly out of the story, just at present. Otherwise, we shall never get any farther forward,—never come to the other groups of force, which are nevertheless formed with a certain clearness in our minds. So we shall bid farewell to the atomic forces of the prakritic layer to things, for the time being. Perhaps we shall come back to them, but that we cannot promise just at present.

For the etheric world of *Ancient and Modern Physics,* we must own that we are in some doubt. It seems to us most probable that *sound* is the force which most clearly belongs to this group; but at the very outset we are met with a difficulty. It is not so much *sound,* or the audible, that which strikes the ear and stirs the sense of hearing, that we mean; but rather the external wave-motion which is the cause of the sound. Let us say, a gun is fired a mile off. The sound comes to our ears, some five seconds later, and we hear it. But there was a certain something, which stretched from the gun to the ear, and was a mile long, so to speak, and this something is what we think should be classed with the etheric layer, to use the phrase of *Ancient and Modern Physics.*

And now, let us frankly confess it, we begin to get into deep water. We saw, to begin with, that the atomic forces are abso-

lutely constant, barring alchemy or other like accidents. Can we say that the sound-force is equally constant? But it is evident that when we speak of atomic force as being constant, we are weighing atomic force against atomic force. And when we ask whether sound is constant, we unconsciously think of weighing it also against atomic force. But we have no warrant for this. We should weigh it against itself, and, if we do, we shall find a certain constancy. That is, the same rate of vibration will always produce the same note; and sound will always travel at the same rate through the same medium in the same condition. But how about sound being a fixed quantity?—a certain definite total of force?

To consider this, we must go back a moment. Our atomic forces have one supreme characteristic. They always work exactly where they are, and they obstinately refuse to act anywhere else. A piece of gold here is a piece of gold here, and not in the next room; it can exert its properties only where it is, and is rigidly and for all time confined to that. But a piano in the next room can make itself heard not only in the next room, but in this room; a street organ can spread its melodious sphere throughout a whole region, making hearts glad where it is not, as well as where it is. Here is something the atomic forces could not boast of. They are hopelessly outclassed in this. Yes; but it will be said, the sound waves can only act where they are, and cannot act where they are not. And we get an idea of sounds as a series of waves in the air, and as air-waves most of our books of physics chiefly treat of them. But they are not necessarily air-waves at all, nor have they necessarily anything to do with air. They will go just as well,—much better, in fact,—in water, and better still in steel. In truth sound will go at all kind of rates, from some eight hundred feet a second, through heavy carbonic acid gas, to some four thousand in hydrogen, and eight or ten thousand in steel.

Now there is no element common to carbonic acid gas, hydrogen and steel, in the material sense. Yet there must be something common to them, something present in them all, which carries sound; and this something must be continuous, throughout our world at any rate, since sound will pass through all kinds of continuations of things; as, for instance, through the air, a brick wall, and a glass window. And it is evident that these material things

exercise some kind of pressure or stress on the sound-carrying medium, in virtue of which sound goes slower through certain things, like carbonic acid gas and air, and quicker through others, like hydrogen and steel. Nor in its passage has sound any effect on the atomic character of the thing it passes through: thus glass will remain glass, in spite of a thousand organ-grinders outside the window, though I am conscious of the fact that the sound is pouring through the glass in a steady stream. It is evident, therefore, that, while there is a relation between the atomic forces of materials and the sound forces which pass through them, it is evident that this relation does not amount to an interchange, by which the one becomes the other, but is rather a kind of pressure or stress exercised by the one on the other, but leaving each unchanged. Not only is the glass, as glass, not changed by the sound, but also the note of the sound is not changed by passing through the glass. Each note is still the same note as it was, before passing through the glass.

Moreover, there seems to be no limit to sound, so far as our earth is concerned. It seems incredible that a sound should carry a thousand miles, but the thing does actually happen. If we could shout loud enough, the sound could travel from London to New York, and we should have no need of long distance telephones, or wireless telegraphy. It is true that, at the rate of five seconds per mile, it would take some fifteen thousand seconds, or let us say four hours, for the word uttered in New York to reach London, and four hours more for the answer to come. Happily, perhaps, we cannot talk loud enough to be heard across the ocean.

But a volcano can, when it really tries. The great explosion between Java and Sumatra, which blew the top off Krakatau volcano, was heard a good deal more than a thousand miles; if our memory is correct, it was heard in Madagascar, on the one side, and in Japan on the other. Therefore sound-waves can travel pretty far. More than that, it is on record that the shock of the wave motion, of this same volcano outburst, traveled right around the earth, and registered itself as so traveling. The ear was at fault, not the sound-wave, and mechanisms more delicate than the ear heard it and marked it down.

Here comes the suggestion that seismic waves, or waves of

earth-quake shock, traveling through the earth, are probably correlated to sound, and belong to the same class of forces. There are, doubtless, others in the same family, but we cannot even guess about their nature or character.

Further, no sound, as a sound, reaches us from outside the earth, though it cannot be that our planet has a monopoly of noise. There must be some limit, some kind of etheric and sound-carrying envelope, stretching from the center of our globe to the confines of our atmosphere, but no further.

(*To be Continued.*)

THE FAR STAR.

A fellah lived at Al Kantarah, "the bridge" of the Suez Canal, where the Canal intersects the caravan track between Syria and Egypt. Back of the place, in front and to the westward, spread the desert, where now the rosy flamingo wings tipped the sands as with flying fire souls, and now, in the moonlight, the hyena laughed, or the jackal or the fox lurked in its shadowy hollows, or a lion roared from the crest of a sand billow. To the East, towards Port Said, the mirage laden waters of Lake Manzalah spread their shallows to the sun. Caravans on their way to Mecca passed the flying bridge. The strong camels of the Camel Corps, grunting no less under their smart equipment and neat bear skin covered saddle; the occasional sportsman after the snipe, quail or ducks of the region; the passengers idle, curious and gossiping, hanging over the rails of the various ocean liners; or soldiery, laughing, betting, smoking on the troop ships—all these made a sufficiently varied kaleidoscope—a mirage, as it were, of the life of other climes cast upon the shifting desert sands and blended to a unity by the pervasive haze peculiar to the East.

But the young fellah saw none of these things. At least, his mind saw them not, or saw them meaningless and devoid of reality as the mirage of the desert. They came and went, panorama of days and nights, devoid of actuality to the mind which never considered them at all. To unsaddle a camel, to repair the bridge, to carry out the orders of the head of the Canal station, these were the pressing, real things, those which he had engaged to do and for which his wage was paid. Young, inexperienced, a fatalist, a dreamer by nature, he was indeed too young as yet to feel any need to know the life which, day by day, pulsed beneath his vacant eyes, those eyes which turned their sight inward, looking there upon a far star, a mirage in its turn, an image of the fancy weaving brain. This star, shining from afar, shone upon all his ways; other thought he had none, except for his round of duty. He was indeed a haunted man; he was haunted by a shape of exceeding sweetness, a great, far shining star. He remembered when he had first seen it, reflected in the well whence he was drawing water, the first night he spent at the station whither he had come on his quest for work. An omen it was to him, at first an omen of selection, a token that his

abiding place was here: later on he saw it in a deeper significance and became to his own thought, the selected of the star. It burned down the distance, not from the heavens, for it was set too low, set nearer the worshipper. Not from the earth, else it had not shone into the well. Remote—yet not too far; high spanned—yet perhaps not inaccessible—this was the dear loveliness of that star, that a boy's fancy, a fellah's longing might reach up and up to it and yet believe, or at least hope, in some dazzling flight of hope, to attain. So ever by day in his mind, and ever at night before his eyes, the far star called to the fellah and became the Mecca of his thought. With Eastern leisureliness he dwelt at El Kantarah and dreamed of the Star which had guided his life into pleasant lines of usefulness; and for the time he dwelt content.

Contentment, in human lives, is a condition which breaks up of a sudden, at a chance touch, when circumstance and time are ripe, as the clouds dissolve into rain at a breath of the East wind. So here, in the mid-East, a touch of Western unrest and Western activity was the dissolvent which broke up the fellah's dream. A missionary passed that way and told the tale of the Nativity and of the wise men who followed a Star. He went again that evening, cheered beyond his wont in his labours by the remembrance of one pair of enkindled eyes shining over by the well. He could not know that what he took for the spirit of diviner things was but the desire fires of the West lit in those Eastern eyes, or that he had introduced a fever of unrest into the quiet dream of the lad. For now, as the boy went about his work, a new thought, a question, fermented on his brain, hitherto unquestioning, passively acquiescent, a point of life scintillating in the mental darkness. Should he too follow a Star?

I know not, for he never told, for how many diurnal rounds this thought abode with him. From a question, a point of half light surrounded by the shadows of doubt, it became an assertion, a demand; then an urgency, at last a despair. The far Star called—and he longed to go. The Star willed—and go he must. Only one point of opposition arose in his mind—that point, his duty to the work he had promised to do. And he had promised to fulfil this obligation by that which the Egyptian fellah holds most sacred. Yet did not the call of the Star absolve him? All his longing melted

to pain and struggle until reason was swept away, and, as it were, his body, a lithe, active, tireless animal propelled by elementary forces, set out one dark night towards the great promontory of Al Fardanah, whereon hung that far Star.

In the hard darkness of the Southern night the Star hung resplendant. Now and again a throb shook and deepened its glowing surface, from which shot out expanding arms which reached, and shone and fiercely contracted, only to dazzle out and shine opalescent and shimmering, yet again. There was a time when from that hot point in the lad's brain question and answer, doubt and hope had come and gone, flickering, blazing, stabbing turn by turn through his brain shaken with the birth throes of a mind. Such thoughts as "Mine oath or the Will of God?" Such questions as: "What shall I find beneath the star and why does it call me?" A doubt: "Is it a mirage or indeed a star?"

A desire: "What have I to gain if I obey?" A hope: "Shall I worship and become as the Star?" All these and all the uncounted host of fancies unleashed in the brain of the lad of the South had been with him. But that was days ago—it seemed a time and times and again times ago. That was all over. The wearied brain was still. The heart seemed to sleep. It was but a young creature fresh and strong in limb and without mental action of any kind which set out towards Al Fardanah, travelling, as it seemed, along a ray of the Star, a ray shot from the Star which ended in his own brain back of the eyes. So the Star drew the lad, drew his heart up and out through his eyes, the eyes fixed upon the great glow of white light high upon Al Fardanah. There were some fourteen miles to traverse, and at first he set out walking, then running, and then a Camel Corps rider left his beast at a station for a moment, and the lad took the temptation in his stride, vaulted on the camel and pushed on Starward, scarcely knowing what he did, and yet conscious too, that a choice had been offered, had been made to the beat of an idea now many moons old, the pulse of "Mine oath or the Will of the Star," intermittently beating in his brain. A hyena laughed—he heard it not, not was he aware of a crouched, pulsating heap upon a sand hillock which was a waiting lion; he shared the fright of his camel no more than he shared its grunts or the reluctance of its gait under the unknown rider. His heart and

brain hung upon his eyes and—these, the seeing essence of all three indeed—these were stationed there at Al Fardanah beating in the core of a pulsating Star.

Al Fardanah—high sand promontory, canal—cut and grim, rose close at last, upon its crest the Star, now of great size, its broad arms outreaching, calmly shining. They boy's heart leapt up, he raised his head as a sweet exultance flooded his being and as he urged his camel over the final intervening space, the voiceless eternal oath which passes between a man and his own soul sprang into silent utterance in the deeps of his nature. With a low cry of joy he heralded his arrival, he sprang from his camel and knelt, his head bent, his trembling lips thrilling the desert sand with human touch and human promise. He lifted that head—and *where was now the Star?* Stunned at first, then dazed, then his brain one tumult of rage, despair and misery, the lad knew that his Star had gone forever. Before him, on the top of the promontory was a small, bare, brown hut, from whose single squat window shone a lamp with its reflector used to light up the great bend of the canal, a lamp extinguished even as he looked. In that instant of swift and awful revulsion that lad felt himself changing, as it were, to a devil, a devil whose motive power was the sense of betrayal by fate, a Fate Divine, yet devilish. It all befell so quickly that words give no idea of it, but concurrently with the birth of this devil mind in him, a new sight met the lad's eyes and startled his brain. Framed by a clump of trees, and, as it were, between the silver horns of the young and newly risen moon, was a dark face, the face of a woman. The liquid eyes and the gold at her ears softly gleamed as she leaned nearer the kneeling lad. She threw to him the red flower at her bosom and laughed as she whispered: "Why comest thou to Al Fardanah?" When he answered hoarsely: "I followed the Star," she laughed again; a laugh of conscious power, the old, old laugh, ages old, of the beautiful woman. "Aye—men have said it; I am she they call the star," she said, stealing down to where he knelt. "I watched thee at the well-side to-day as the caravan passed; and thou—didst thou not mark me when I fled, and follow on to find me and aid my flight? But be quick now."

The woman tugged at his shoulder and he found himself on his feet.

Her glance fell on the camel, she ran to it, searched the saddle

pouch, and turned to him with a new respect in her eyes. She had not thought him capable of *this*. She measured him, a mere slim stripling, weighing him against a young camel with gold and papers in its saddle pouches, and found in him, all at once, those sources of strength which elemental woman worships. That he should have stolen this? and for love of her! It was indeed the heady Venus wine she quaffed. "Be quick! Be quick!" she cried, urging him on. "We must away! We shall be followed!" She ran to fetch a small bundle from behind a palm where she had hidden it. This gave the lad a breathing pause, for a moment; no more. While that newly born strong devil ramped in his brain, from his heart seemed to gush and to flood a sweet pity for the boy that he was, for the ruin of a pure dream. He threw himself upon the sand, crying out in misery, looking up in vain to the remorseless skies. But were they remorseless utterly? In the remote blue there soared, calm and pure in its withdrawn splendour, Venus-Lucifer, the Morning Star. Half unconscious, he cried out to it in his heart—that heart which so long had followed a Star. Surely there was response? Did not the Star throb? Or was it his own heart? As in a vision there passed before his inner mental gaze the picture of a lad and a woman all too beautiful, hurrying Southward with a camel and stolen gold. It went to his head like new wine, but also it lightened those secret nerves which the soul hides somewhere in our mortal form. Once again he vowed a vow, but this was a silent oath which passed between a fellah of Egypt and the Morning Star. In the midst of his bewilderment and the upheaval of his nature, that quiet light enthroned above laid a cool touch upon his fevered mind. Lithe and wary, the woman came behind him. Her arm lay on his shoulder, her lips sought his. "Once and away," she laughed, and bade the camel kneel. Then a strange arm swung her aside, a strange voice bade her begone; surely that was a stranger youth who sprang upon the beast, urging it back to El Kantarah, to its master, towards a fellah's duty! Whatever aspect resolve had caused that face to wear; whatever being new born to the dignity of self restraint and noble purpose now hurried toward El Kantarah on a camel eager to rejoin its master, one thing is sure. Once again the Morning star, rising in the East, looked down upon a birth, the Birth of that Christ Light

shining within the human Soul, though it were only enshrined within the breast of a sorely stricken fellah who still returned to his duty.

Under the ray of the Far Star the Christ soul was *once again* born into the world of Humanity. For "when the half gods go, the gods arrive."

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"To all men and women of whatever caste, creed, race, or religious belief, who aim at the fostering of peace, gentleness, and unselfish regard one for another, and the acquisition of such knowledge of men and nature as shall tend to the elevation and advancement of the human race, it sends most friendly greeting and freely proffers its services.

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